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ABSTRACT

This charter of principles and beliefs was developed by the Centre for the Studies of Inclusive Education in the United Kingdom. Principles are first listed and then explained in detail. The principles are: (1) the end of all segregated education on the grounds of disability or learning difficulty as a policy commitment and national goal; (2) the end of segregation in education as a human rights issue belonging within equal opportunities policies; (3) recognition that, since all children share equal value and status, the exclusion of children from the mainstream because of disability or learning difficulty is a devaluation and is discriminating; (4) the gradual transfer of resources, expertise, staff, and pupils from segregated special schools to an appropriately supported diverse and inclusive mainstream; (5) recognition that, since segregated education is a major cause of society's prejudice against adults with disabilities, desegregating special education is necessary to help change discriminatory attitudes; (6) recognition that efforts to increase participation of people with disabilities or difficulties in learning in community life will be seriously jeopardized unless segregated education is reduced and ultimately ended; and (7) the necessity for central and local governments to do all in their power to work toward the goal of a desegregated education system. (DB)

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The INCLUSION CHARTER

***Ending segregation in education for all children and
young people with disabilities and/or learning difficulties.***

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The INCLUSION CHARTER

Ending segregation in education for all children and young people with disabilities and/or learning difficulties.

The Charter's Seven Points

1. We fully support an end to all segregated education on the grounds of disability or learning difficulty, as a policy commitment and goal for this country.
2. We see the ending of segregation in education as a human rights issue which belongs within equal opportunities policies.
3. We believe that all children share equal value and status. We therefore believe that the exclusion of children from the mainstream because of disability or learning difficulty is a devaluation and is discriminating.
4. We envisage the gradual transfer of resources, expertise, staff and pupils from segregated special schools to an appropriately-supported, diverse and inclusive mainstream.
5. We believe that segregated education is a major cause of society's widespread prejudice against adults with disabilities or difficulties. De-segregating special education is therefore a crucial first step in helping to change discriminatory attitudes, in creating greater understanding and in developing a fairer society.
6. We believe that efforts to increase participation of people with disabilities or difficulties in learning in community life will be seriously jeopardised unless segregated education is reduced and ultimately ended.
7. For these reasons we call on Central and Local Governments to do all in their power to work as quickly as possible towards the goal of a de-segregated education system.

See over leaf for a further explanation of the seven points ...

The Charter was first drawn up in 1989 by the Centre for the Studies of Inclusive Education
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The INCLUSION CHARTER

A further explanation

1. ***'We fully support an end to all segregated education on the grounds of disability or learning difficulty as a policy commitment and goal for this country'.***

Segregation in education is exclusion from the mainstream in separate settings without a time limit or a plan for inclusion. It is also education under separate management from the mainstream.

This description applies to special schools and can also apply to special units in ordinary schools when they are run separately from the everyday life of the school, when the children are not members of the appropriate class for their age group and when there is no plan to include them.

Time spent out of the ordinary classroom for appropriate individual or group work on a part-time basis is not segregation. Neither is removal from the ordinary classroom for therapy or because of disruption, provided it is time-limited, for a specified purpose and based on a goal-oriented plan aimed at returning the child to his or her ordinary class. Settings are within the child's mainstream school if possible and certainly within the mainstream system. Any form of time-out from the ordinary classroom should not affect a pupil's right to full membership of the mainstream.

Parents who have children in separate special schools because local policies make that the only option can still support a goal to end segregation. Working towards a de-segregated education system is working towards a better education for all children. The benefits of inclusion apply to all children, disabled and non-disabled alike.

2. ***'We see the ending of segregation in education as a human rights issue which belongs within equal opportunities policies'.***

Segregation in education because of disability or learning difficulty is a contravention of human rights as is segregation because of race or gender. The difference is that while sexism and racism are widely recognised as discrimination and outlawed in many LEAs' equal opportunities policies, discrimination on the grounds of disability or learning difficulty is not.

The United Nations 1975 Declaration of the Rights of Disabled People states:

'Whatever the origin, nature and seriousness of their handicaps and disabilities, disabled people have the same fundamental rights as their fellow citizens of the same age'.

The United Nations 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child says that the education of children with disabilities or difficulties in learning should ensure they receive the 'fullest possible social inclusion and individual development'. It should prepare a child for an active and responsible life as an adult.

In a 1954 United States Supreme Court Decision concerning racial segregation in education, Chief Justice Earl Warren said: 'Purposeful segregation generates a feeling of inferiority as to a child's status in the community that may affect their hearts and minds in a way unlikely ever to be undone...the sense of inferiority affects the motivation of the child to learn and has a tendency to retard their educational and mental development'. Disabled adults, describing themselves as 'special school survivors' speak of similar negative feelings as a result of their segregated education.

The London Borough of Newham's policy statement on special education is a good example of an education authority making the link between segregated education and equal opportunities:

'The Council believes that segregated special education is a major factor causing discrimination. We therefore believe that desegregating special education is the first step in tackling prejudice against people with disabilities and other difficulties. They have been omitted from previous Equal Opportunities initiatives, and it is now obvious that our aim of achieving comprehensive education in Newham will remain hindered while we continue to select approximately two per cent of school pupils for separate education'.

- 3. *'We believe that all children share equal value and status. We therefore believe that the exclusion of children from the mainstream because of disability or learning difficulty is a devaluation and is discriminating'.***

Pupils with severe learning difficulties are of no less value than pupils who gain Oxbridge entry and their achievements are no less worthy of respect. To select a pupil out of the mainstream because of disability or learning difficulty is a devaluation of their worth as a person and discriminating on the basis of an attribute for which they are not responsible.

The Charter does not accept that segregating children with disabilities or difficulties in special schools can be classed as positive discrimination on the grounds that the separation is for their benefit. There is now no teaching or

care that takes place in a special school that is not also taking place in an ordinary school, somewhere. Segregation of a minority group, based on a natural attribute such as disability or learning difficulty, gives distorted messages to all members of society as to who is eligible to membership of the mainstream, and who is not.

There is no compelling body of evidence to suggest that segregated special education has significant benefits for pupils compared with ordinary school placements with appropriate support. On the contrary, American research shows that children do better academically and socially in ordinary schools (Harvard Educational Review, November 1987). And work produced in 1992 highlighted a string of disturbing findings by different researchers on the negative effects of segregated education. (Sam Carson, 1992).

The benefits of inclusion are well demonstrated by CSIE and elsewhere. In 1995 the National Center on Educational Restructuring and Inclusion (NCERI) in New York conducted a national study of inclusive education across America. They found: positive outcomes for teachers and both disabled and non-disabled pupils; significant increases in inclusion; pupils with a wider range of disabilities now included and the restructuring of schools affecting inclusion programmes, and vice-versa.

Research by the National Foundation for Educational Research published in 1981 shows that far from damaging the ordinary school, inclusion adds to a school's strength and enhances the provision for all children. In this country and abroad there are many examples of effective inclusion covering all types and degree of disability or difficulty in learning. In parts of Canada, for example, there are LEAs where no special schools exist; all children are in the mainstream.

To argue that it is beneficial to 'congregate' children in separate special schools because that is where the vast majority of appropriate provision is located, is misleading. The concentration of resources in the special sector may be a current explanation for segregating children: it is not a justification. 'Congregation' of pupils with 'similar' needs is a highly suspicious way of educating them; at its best, it is done for administrative expediency and at its worst, it is because the mainstream wishes to reject certain members of the school community.

4. *'We envisage the gradual transfer of resources, expertise, staff and pupils from segregated schools to an appropriately supported and diverse mainstream'.*

Because of the paramount need to move appropriate support for children with disabilities or difficulties into the mainstream the Charter envisages ending segregation by a gradual transfer of resources from the segregated sector and

the development of resources within the mainstream. The provision of appropriate support for children with disabilities or difficulties in ordinary schools is synonymous with inclusion. Inclusive education without support is not inclusion: it is dumping. According to the 1992 Audit Commission/HMI report, provision for children with special educational needs across England and Wales in 1990-91 cost £1.5 billion. The Charter envisages an incremental re-arrangement of budgets by LEAs to direct this level of funding as an absolute minimum to support pupils in ordinary schools.

In our vision of inclusion the mainstream will change and adapt to accommodate diverse needs. A diverse mainstream would accept and cater for differences, not submerge or isolate them. We do not want to see the autonomy and strength of culturally strong groups like the blind community and the deaf community weakened through assimilation. Nor do we want to isolate teachers who have relevant specific skills.

Total Communication would be used in the education of deaf children in ordinary schools and as many hearing adults and pupils as possible would be encouraged to have some facility with British Sign Language and finger spelling. The employment of adults with disabilities or difficulties as part of teaching and non-teaching staff teams would be another important development in preserving autonomy and giving children appropriate role models. All teachers with their individual skills and interests, including those with specific skills, would be equally valuable in a diverse mainstream.

5. ***'We believe that segregated education is a major cause of society's widespread prejudice against adults with disabilities or difficulties. De-segregating special education is therefore a crucial first step in helping to change discriminatory attitudes, in creating greater understanding and in developing a fairer society'.***

Continued segregation of disabled and non-disabled pupils can only help foster stereotypes, while inclusion has the potential to get rid of stereotypes by enabling young people to learn about each other's common humanity as well as their uniqueness. Fear of disability by non-disabled people has its roots, at least in part, in the denied relationships of earlier years.

Adults who have been educated within the special school system often identify early segregation as the key factor in creating conditions which lead to prejudice and barriers encountered in later life.

The international People First self-advocacy group says it is systemic cruelty to expose disabled children to constant rejection and to teach non-disabled children to be prejudiced against people with special needs. In his book *'Achieving the Complete School'* (1985), Douglas Biklen of Syracuse

University, USA, discusses stigma and stereotyping (the negative valuation of a whole person based on a single attribute) in relation to disability. He points out that stigma is manufactured; it is learned behaviour. More importantly research suggests that the most effective way of combating stigma is through planned, personal interaction of those who have been 'labelled' and those who have not.

UNESCO's Salamanca statement (1994) was signed by 92 Governments and 25 international organisations and called for inclusive schools to be the norm.

'Regular schools with this inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all; moreover, they provide an effective education to the majority of children and improve the efficiency and ultimately the cost-effectiveness of the entire education system'.

6. ***'We believe that efforts to increase participation of people with disabilities or difficulties in community life will be seriously jeopardised unless segregated education is reduced and ultimately ended'.***

Continuing segregated special education seriously undermines community care policies which aim to create more opportunities for people with disabilities or learning difficulties to participate in ordinary life.

Unless education is de-segregated and efforts made to combat stereotyping and prejudice before it begins, it is unlikely that community care policies will be fully effective. Providing support services in the community can facilitate greater participation by people with disabilities or learning difficulties; friendship and acceptance by ordinary people is a vital ingredient in making it happen.

7. ***'For these reasons we call on Central and Local Governments to do all in their power to work as quickly as possible towards the goal of a de-segregated education system'.***

Working towards the goal of a de-segregated education system means making a commitment to do everything possible to provide appropriate learning support for all children in ordinary schools. It involves mainstream schools adapting and changing to accommodate diverse needs and receiving the financial and other resources they need to enable them to do this. It means working to overcome the problems and difficulties that will inevitably arise in the change process.

This goal needs to be adopted at three levels.

- * By Central Government and the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) through non-discriminatory legislation covering all LEAs and schools.
- * By LEAs in policy documents which give the goal of inclusion the same status as other equal opportunity policy commitments.
- * By local schools drawing up and implementing inclusive school policies, as part of their wider school development plans.

In May, 1990, the Council of The European Communities and Education Ministers agreed:

'Full inclusion into mainstream education should be considered as a first option in all appropriate cases. All education establishments should be in a position to respond to the needs of pupils and students with disabilities'.

The United Nations Standard Rules on the Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (1993) calls on all countries to have a clearly stated policy on inclusive education that is understood at school and wider community levels; they should allow for a flexible curriculum as well as additions and adaptations and provide quality materials, on-going teacher-training and support teachers. Inclusive education and community-based programmes should be seen as complementary approaches to cost-effective education and training for disabled people. Communities should develop local resources to provide this education.

In July, 1994, the Council for Disabled Children in the UK agreed a new policy statement on inclusion:

'The CDC believes that no child should be denied inclusion in mainstream provision. Mainstream provision should offer the full range of support and specialist services necessary to give all children their full entitlement to a broad and balanced education'.

The CDC added that the present element of compulsion in special school placement was 'inequitable and against the best interests of disabled people and their families'.

For further discussion on the principles of inclusion, please see CSIE's report **'Inclusive Education. A framework for change. National and international perspectives'** (published October 1997, price £4.50).

CHARTER SIGNERS

September 1997

Organisations

Advisory Centre for Education (ACE)
Action for Dysphasic Adults (ADA)
Alliance for Inclusive Education
Arthritis Care
Asn. of Blind & Partially Sighted Teachers & Students (ABAPSTAS)
ATAXIA Fighting Friedreich's & Other Cerebellar Ataxias
Barnardos
Bolton Institute of Higher Education
School of Educ. & Health Studies
British Diabetic Association
Brittle Bone Society
Cambridge 81 Action
Campaign for the Advancement of State Education (CASE)
Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education (CSIE)
Cheviots Children's Centre, Enfield
ChildLine
CMH Tameside
Chicken Shed Theatre Company
Children's Legal Centre
Children's Society
Cystic Fibrosis Research Trust
Daycare Trust (National Childcare Campaign)
Disability Action
Disability Resource Team
Disability Scotland (Scottish Council on Disability)
Elfrida Rathbone Camden
Greater London Association of Disabled People (GLAD)
Hyperactive Children's Support Group
Independent Panel for Special Education Advice (IPSEA)
KIDS Centre (Working for Children with Special Needs)
Lewisham Asn. of People with Disabilities
LINC (Liaison of those Involved in the Needs of Children)
Markfield Project
Muscular Dystrophy Group of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
Myalgic Encephalomyelitis Association (ME)
National Asn. of Citizens Advice Bureaux (NACAB)
National Asthma Campaign
National Citizen Advocacy
National Foster Care Association
NSPCC (National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children)
Network 81
People First
PHAB (Physically Handicapped and Able Bodied)
Pre-school Learning Alliance
Socialist Educational Association
Spinal Injuries Association
Supporting Children in Ordinary Living
VIA - Values Into Action
Young Arthritis Care

Political Parties

The Green Party

Local Education Authorities

Metropolitan Borough of Calderdale
Derbyshire County Council
London Borough of Newham

York Diocesan Board of Education

MPs

Tony Banks
Harry Barnes
John Battle
Joe Benton
Gerry Bermingham
Roger Berry
David Blunkett
Paul Boateng
Anne Campbell
Dennis Canavan
Frank Cook
Robin Corbett
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Trade Unions

COHSE (Health Care Union)
General, Municipal, Boilermakers and Allied Trades Union (GMB)
MSF - Manufacturing, Science and Finance
Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU)

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